



Coral Fern  
- a new  
district  
record -  
See Notes

# CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

MARCH 1989

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## DOWNY THORN-APPLE

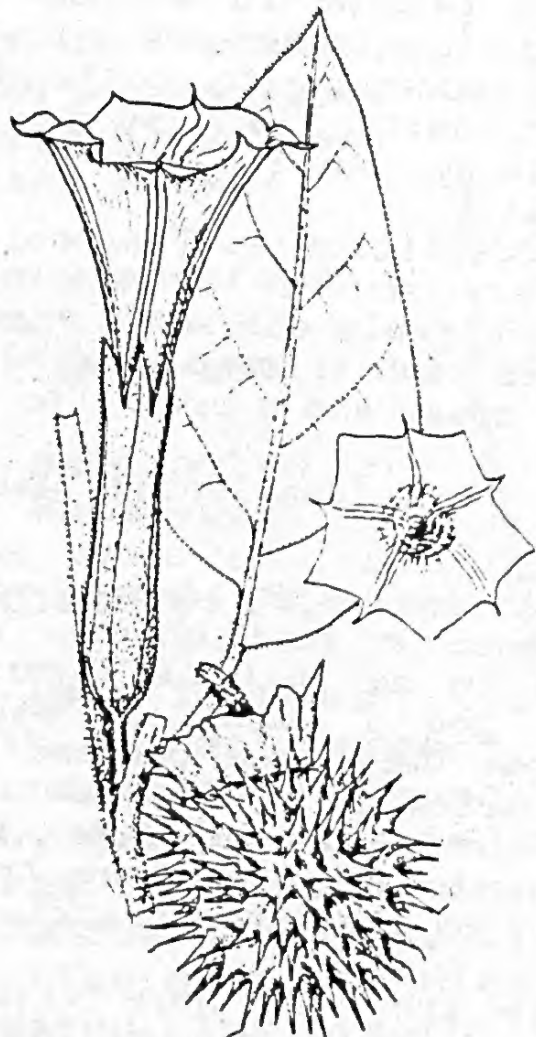
Several specimens of Downy Thorn-apple have been noticed growing along the Maldon - Bridgewater Road.

Thorn-apple is a good description, as the fruit are covered with sharp stout spines. The lower leaf surface is covered with a dense fur (and hence the name "Downy"). The plant grows to a low shrub. It has large slightly wavy leaves, and long (10 cm or more) white tube flowers.

This is a new record for the Club's plant list, and also a new record for grid H, and a new record for the Castlemaine Plant List.

The plant is reputed to be very poisons, and produces many dire symptoms before death.

It is a member of the tomato family. Latin name is *Datura innoxia*. It is native to the Mexico region.



The sketch is from Flora of S.A.

## Two Other Places to Visit

### Tipperary Springs, Daylesford

In the process of checking out a walk for the C.H.I.R.P. Walking Group last November I went down to Tipperary Springs and followed some of the walking track, taking the track towards Twin Bridges (on the Highway) and Central Springs. It is a beautiful walk, though the track is narrow, and there are a couple of steep pinches, though a lot of it follows the old water race, and is therefore fairly flat. There were lots of ferns and violets, and there were birds everywhere.

I only went as far as what proved to be a short cut through the creek, and then walked back on the other side, taking the track along the creek instead of the higher one, and the circuit took me just under an hour - the estimated times on the C.F. & L. information sheet must have been done by some pretty quick walkers who didn't see a thing!

I was talking to a local later and she told me that the walk the other way, towards Bryces Flat ("into the bush", according to her) is really lovely, but rough. I must admit, I'd like to be really crazy and do the whole 14 km, but I'd like all day to do it.

The facilities at Tipperary are worth mentioning, too. There are several of the usual low fireplaces and the combined table-cum-seats, as well as a shelter. The grass is kept trimmed, and altogether it is a very pleasant picnic spot, and a credit to the C.F. & L.

### Golden Springs walk, Hepburn Springs

I felt that the above walk wasn't suitable for the Walkers, and we decided to go to Hepburn Springs instead. It proved a good choice, and the Golden Springs walk proved to be full of interest - plenty of flowers and birds, and a koala, as well as some historical sites, and some very nice gardens on the last leg of the walk.

The track is a bit wider most of the way, without the steep drops to one side, and the C.F. & L. have been working to improve these tracks (they'd only just made a start on the other track).

There are many more visitors to Hepburn, of course, but it would be a great spot for a family outing during the week.

*Rita Nieu*

## NEW RUSH

Another Rush has been added to the Club's Plant List.

Many of the Victorian rushes do not yet have names, and are referred to as *Juncus* sp (A), and so on. The new rush is known as *Juncus* sp (O). It was found growing on the western side of Cairn Curran.

*Juncus* sp (O) can be recognised rather easily. It has these characters.

- \* stems are bluish green.
- \* stems are robust and thick (over 3 mm wide).
- \* Pith is continuous in most of the stem, but has air spaces just below the flower
- \* Flowers are moderately large (> 2.5 mm)
- \* The basal sheaths are a bark brown/reddish brown.
- \* The stem striations are very numerous (>70) but are quite distinct.
- \* Flowers are more or less clustered.

*Juncus* sp (O) has previously been noted on Club excursions to Tullaroop Reservoir.

## RUSHY GLEN at CHEWTON

One of our valued members. Beth Ibbitson, is transferring to Melbourne. A visit to her property during January found at least nine species of rush growing near her dam, or in the nearby gully. This is an unusually large number of species to be seen in such a small area. The rushes were *Juncus usitatus*, *J.* sp(A), *amabilis*, *J.* *subsecundus*, *J.* *flavidus*; *J.* *holoschoenus*, *J.* *homalocaulis* and *J.* *capitatus*. The ninth rush as been provisionally identified as *J.* *flavidus*, and a specimen has been sent to Melbourne for confirmation. It is likely that Toad Rush also occurs here.





## C.F.N.C. PUBLICATIONS

The Club received a \$550 grant last year, and \$500 this year from the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands, to prepare natural history booklets. The Club now has these publications.

Orchids of the Castlemaine District. \$1.00. The booklet is written and illustrated by Rita Mills (with two sketches by Geoff Sitch). The orchids to be found in the district are described, and all except a few very rare orchids are illustrated. Size is A4.

Common Orchids of the Castlemaine District. 30c. This is a reduced version of the "Orchids of the Castlemaine District". All of the common orchids are described and illustrated. Folded A4

Geological Features of the Castlemaine District. 30c. Locations of interesting geological features are given, with directions for reaching them. A brief description is also given. Folded A4.

Fryerstown Tour. 30c. A guide-yourself tour to Fryerstown, Irishtown, Vaughan, Tarilta and Guildford. It includes items of geological, natural historical and historical interest. Folded A4.

Tour of Castlemaine City. 30c. The booklet gives locations of interesting features in the city area. Folded A4.

Castlemaine Bird List. \$1. The list gives birds recorded in the district, the areas in which they have been recorded, and brief notes about each. A4.

Birds of the Castlemaine District. 20c. This is a reduced version of "Castlemaine Bird List". It omits locality records. Folded A4

Street Trees of Castlemaine. 20c. The booklet lists the trees known to be growing in the streets of Castlemaine. Brief descriptions of the trees are given, with sample localities. Folded A4

Wildflowers of the Castlemaine Goldfields. 20c. The common wildflowers to be found in the local forests are listed, with brief descriptions to enable identification be made. Plants are grouped according to flower colour and shape. Folded A4.

Castlemaine Plant List. \$1. Each of the plants known to grow wild within about a 25 km radius is listed in family order, with locations. The district has been

divided into about 55 areas for this purpose. Scientific and common names are given. A4.

Eucalypts of the Castlemaine District. 30c. The eucalypts of the district are described and illustrated (with sketches of buds, fruit and juvenile leaves). A key is included. Unlike most eucalypt keys, this is based primarily on arrangement and shape of the juvenile leaves. Folded A4 (in press).

Wattles of the Castlemaine District. 30c. The wattles of the district are described and illustrated. A key is included. Folded A4 (in preparation).

Botanic Gardens Castlemaine. 20c. A few years ago, the trees of Castlemaine Botanic gardens were named and numbered. The booklet gives the tree names corresponding to the numbers. Folded A4.

The Club does not make a profit from the sales. Proceeds are used to re-print the booklets.

The second edition of "Wildflowers of the Castlemaine goldfields" will be printed early in the new year. Its price will be 30c.

## DAWN AT WALMER

A total of 26 birds were seen during a visit to Dr. Champion's dam at Walmer on 16/2/89. About half a dozen Little Grebe were swimming and diving on the dam. A Wood Duck, one of a flock, landed on the dam, only to crowded out by the grebes. Rainbow Birds were also seen, flying to the water surface, and drinking, while still in flight.

Birds seen were

White-winged Chough	Little Raven	Little Cuckoo shrike
Masked Lapwing	Yellow-tufted Honeyeater	Galah
Diamond Firetail	Black-chinned Honeyeater	Kookaburra
Little Grebe	Bronzewing Pigeon	White-faced Heron
Black-fronted Plover	Little Pied Cormorant	Mudlark
Eastern Rosella	Fuscous Honeyeater	Red-rump Parrot
Welcome Swallow	Red-wattle Bird	Restless Flycatcher
Rainbow Bird	Willy Wagtail	

Seven species of rush were found near the edges of the dam. These were *Juncus amabilis* (Common Rush), *J. pallidus* (Pale Rush), *J. subsecundus* (Finger Rush), *J. usitatus* (Common Rush), *J. sp (A)* (Remote-flowered Rush), *J. holoschoenus* (Jointed Rush) and *J. sp (O)*.

# TULLAROOP BIRD LIST

The highlights of the trip included the numerous White-browed Woodswallows which were feeding young, the Darters, one of which swam to a convenient vantage point before climbing from the water to spread its wings, and the Long-necked Tortoise, sitting on a fence pole in the water.

Little Black Cormorant	Grey Teal	White-winged Chough	
Little Pied Cormorant	Blue Wren	Magpie	Wood Duck
Large Black Cormorant	Rainbow Bird	Masked Lapwing	
Great Crested-grebe	Hoary-headed Grebe	Little Grebe	
Yellow Spoonbill	Galah	Mountain Duck	Little Eagle
Black-fronted Dotterell	Red-rump Parrot	Sacred Ibis	
White-plumed Honeyeater	Fuscous Honeyeater	Black Duck	
White-browed Woodswallow	Willy Wagtail	Swan Musk Duck	
Restless Flycatcher	Coot Red Wattle Bird	Jacky Winter	
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Brown Treecreeper	Darter	
Little Cuckoo-shrike	White-fronted Chat	Silver Gull	
Southern Yellow Robin	Satin Flycatcher	Tree Martin	

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CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. Inc. P.O. Box 324, Castlemaine 3450.

Committee: George Broadway (Pres), Barbara Maund (Sec), Maggie Oliver (VP), Rita Mills (Newsletter), Kaye Turner (Program Sec), Ern Perkins (Treas), Margaret Dunne, Elma Kelly, Ian Higgins.  
Librarian: Lesley Perkins.

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## SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1989

Pensioner/student	\$3	Single	\$5
Family	\$8	Supporting	\$12
Newsletter Posted: Membership subscription plus \$5			

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## SUPPER ROSTER

Mar 10	E Kelly, M Dunne	Aug 11	M & M Willis
Apr 14	E Duffin, M Oliver	Sept 8	G Sitch, J Buntine
May 12	M Downie, K Meehan	Oct 13	M & R Holden
June 9	E & F Blake	Nov 10	B Maund M Downie
Jul 14	K Turner, L Perkins	Dec 8	P Shaw, E Hall



## FEBRUARY NOTES

BARKERS CREEK BIRD SIGHTINGS by the Palmers at Barkers Creek include Red-capped Robin, Brush Bronzewing and Hylacola.

SWIFTS AT GUILDFORD. Hundreds of Swifts (probably Needletails) were seen on the storm front in early February by B. Perry.

FROG-MOUTHS. Three have been seen at Guildford, again by B. Perry.

WHITE-BROWED SCRUB-WRENS were seen by B. Perry, perched on the back of a kangaroo, and plucking fur. Brown-headed Honeyeaters have also been seen engaged in a similar activity.

YELLOW-FOOTED ANTICHINUS has been seen at The Goldfields Nursery., and also a Brush-tailed phascogale on the roof beams. R. Mills reported remains of a Phascogale and a Sugar Glider with a neighbour's cat.

MAGPIE CHASES COCKATOO. G. Evans saw a small flock of Cockatoos, one of which was chased through the flock by a magpie, before the magpie gave up the chase.

SPIDERS AT WATTLE FLAT. F. Blake, on a visit to Wattle Flat in mid-January, saw thousands of small spiders. The spiders had made webs between the trees, making walking through the forest very difficult. The spiders had small white rectangles on their backs.

COPPERS ALONG CREEK. I. Higgins, on a visit to the trees planted near the junction of Barkers and Forest Creek, noticed that many of the wattles have been almost defoliated by grubs of Coppers (a blue-winged butterfly).

BROKEN SLEEP OF OUR PRESIDENT, who, on a camping trip to Wilsons Promontory, was woken by a Wombat endeavouring to burrow under his tent.

LONG BILLED CORELLAS. A pair were seen flying over the township in early February.

CORAL FERN AT TARADALE. Coral Fern (*Gleichenia microphylla*) has been seen growing along the water race at Taradale, near Saltwater Track. This is a new species and family record for the plant list.

DWARF GEEBUNG (or *Persoonia chamaepuce*) was also found by I Higgins at Taradale. This is a new locality record.

## CASTLEMAINE F.N.C. AGENDA

Fri 10 March. RECLAMATION OF MINED AREAS.

Speaker is Ian Higgins. Bring items for our display at V.F.N.C.A. campout.

Mar 10-14. COSTERFIELD. BOC camp

Mar 11-13 OCEAN GROVE CAMPOUT at "Ingermells" Uniting Church camp. \$18 per day (approx) including 3 meals.

Frid: 7.30 Slide show - History of Bellarine Peninsula.

Sat 7.00 pm. WVFNCA general meeting.

Sat 8.30 pm. "Bird migrants to the Bellarine Peninsula"

Sun 7.00 pm. VFNCA annual meeting.

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Sun 8.30 pm. "Underwater photography"

Excursions include Rock shore exploration, Mud Island trip, Marine biology cruise, mud-flat and plankton study, snorkel with seals, bird watch on Sand Is., Barwon Heads Bluff area, Mangrove Study, Breanlea estuary walk, Mannerim birdwatch, Edwards point walk, Lake Victoria/Clows Swamp, snorkel with the fish, and/or bird watch at Ocean Grove or at Moolap.

Detailed brochure and booking sheets from E. Perkins. Some excursions have costs. See booking sheet.

Sat 8 April. CROSBIE STATE FOREST, (Heathcote). BOC bus trip. Leader is Pat Bingham.

Fri 14 April. ORCHIDS with Gary Cheers. Gary is President of Maryborough F.N.C. High School at 8 p.m.

Sat 15 April. Bird watching east of Elphinstone. See the snow gums, and have afternoon tea at Cascade Falls. Meet S.E.C., Mostyn St at 1.30 sharp.

Sun 28 May. BLACK HILL, KYNETON. BOC outing

Fri 12 May. FIVE REGIONS OF AUSTRALIA with Rob Watkins, Bendigo F.N.C and Vic Nature Photography Group. High School at 8.00 p.m.

Sat 13 May. MT FRANKLIN AND HEPBURN SPRINGS. Lunch at Mt Franklin and then at Hepburn Forest. Details next newsletter. [replaces Black Hill excursion]

Sept 8-9 W.V.F.N.C.A. campout at Castlemaine

Sat 14 Oct. SANDON. Joint excursion, led by Ballarat F.N.C. Meet Black Duck hotel at 10.30 a.m. Take lunch.

Oct 21-23 W.V.F.N.C.A. campout at Creswick